

and register at the courthouse or they happen to be knowledgeable enough to know when the outside registration facility in this particular neighborhood, one per year probably, is going to be set up. This would make it easier for them to participate. I think a lot of you, particularly those of you in this nonpartisan body who happen to have an "R" behind your name did receive a letter from the Republican Party in opposition to this bill. They made five points in that letter. Two of those were addressed I believe by the committee amendments, two of those were just addressed by the Smith amendment to the committee amendments. The objection then that was left was basically a philosophically one which Mr. Brashear indicates that passing LB 439 will not magically bring about increased voter participation. He may be right. It may not see a huge increase in the number of citizens that participate, but I will feel comfortable as a state senator that at least we in government are not responsible for limiting participation in the process. We've done everything we can to make it as easy as possible, consistent with fair, honest elections to encourage people to participate and I think that's the philosophical argument behind this bill. I'd ask you to advance LB 439 as amended.

SPEAKER NICHOL: Senator Barrett, please.

SENATOR BARRETT: Thank you, Mr. President, members. 439 is a bill which I'm not totally enchanted with and I guess my concerns are my own, not having come to me from any individual or any particular political party. The bill, I believe, is billed as a means of increasing voter turnout, but I don't believe that recent elections have really proved that point. Last year's presidential election is perhaps a case in point. I think we had a record number of people who had registered, but the number who actually voted was about the same as in previous presidential elections and I think if one cared to do a little research, you would find that trend continued through previous presidential elections and even the local and state elections. We still have in this country, whether we like it or not, the lowest voter turnout of any, apparently of any democracy. It's a pretty sad statistic, but I don't think that mail registration is going to alter in any way that terrible statistic. I am grateful to Senator Smith for the amendments which she has presented because I think those amendments do make the bill a better bill. I've also had a concern I guess with the increased